

Public Works Committee  
meeting of Tuesday, July 19, 2005  
1st floor meeting room, Town Hall

present: Guilford Mooring, Steve Puffer, Vince O'Connor, Michael Cann, Doug Lowing, Rob Crowner

1. Meeting called to order at 7:10pm.

Guilford announces that the Select Board has reconstituted the Parking Commission, with one seat reserved for a member of the PWC. The PWC will have to choose one of its members to serve on the Parking Commission. Rob would like to resume substantive discussion of the streets and sidewalks repair lists with an eye toward arriving at a recommendation.

2. Old Business

Guilford reports that the Select Board has not made a decision about painting crosswalks on Amity Street, and that there has been no response to the committee's memo about right turns on red.

3. Parking Commission

Guilford explains the makeup and duties of the Parking Commission. There will be four at-large members, along with representatives from the Planning Board, Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee, Downtown Commercial Relations Committee, Disability Access Committee, and the Public Works Committee. The first item on the commission's agenda will be to make a recommendation about the parking spaces in front of the Dickinson Museum on Main Street. Vince observes that the PWC representative will be in a position to bring public works issues from the parking commission back to the PWC as well as vice-versa. He also notes that an alternate can be named to represent the PWC when the primary rep cannot.

Guilford states that the DPW will begin repainting parking spaces on Wednesday, July 20, since the humidity will be breaking. Vince suggests that a few extra spaces could be squeezed in by careful remeasurement of distances. However, Guilford notes that he has no complete parking meters to install, though he plans to order parts soon.

4. Main Street parking

The solutions that have been proposed for the Main Street parking spaces include moving parking onto the side streets to the south of Main Street, moving the sidewalk in front of the Dickinson Museum from Churchill east to the Dickinson Homestead driveway about four feet to the north in order to make room for a bike lane, and leaving the parking situation as it currently is. The committee discusses these options, with some disagreement. Vince suggests that parking for Dickinson Museum staff might be obtained in the lot where Valley Bikes used to be located, and Doug thinks Amherst College might be persuaded to find space somewhere.

Guilford notes with regard to the sidewalk that there is more right-of-way than is currently being used, and that there wouldn't be a problem east of the driveway (where the hill becomes steep) because there is no parking there now and there is enough room

for a bike lane. Vince is not happy about how the corner across from Sweetzer Park turned out and points out that regardless of what happens in front of the Dickinson Museum there can be no bike lane next to the park west of Churchill. He suggests that a sign warning of the end of the bike lane and encouraging drivers to "share the road" be installed as part of any solution. Guilford agrees that this can be done.

#### 5. Parking Commission, part 2

Rob agrees to serve as the PWC representative to the Parking Commission, while pointing out that the committee did not seem to have a consensus about the commission's first order of business. Vince agrees to be the alternate. The committee unanimously approves these appointments.

#### 6. Sidewalks and Roads

Guilford states that he is behind in preparing the sidewalk and road information that the committee requested, due to the amount of work in which his department is presently involved. Doug states his desire for the committee to be able to present to the public some idea of what to expect: i.e., what needs to be done, how long it would take, and how much it would cost. Vince requests that the list of roads needing drainage work be included in the next agenda.

Guilford is not optimistic that there will be enough money for roads in the capital plan beyond Chapter 90 funds for the near future. Vince states that the town should be encouraged to realign its capital plan priorities and/or advocate at the state level for full funding of Chapter 90. He suggests that the PWC use the information that it will be gathering to make a recommendation to the Select Board about prioritizing public works projects. Doug points out that the committee will need the information it has requested in order to make an informed case. Guilford believes that he can prepare it by the September meeting because paving work should be finished by mid August.

#### 7. Right turn on red

Vince would like the committee to present in person its memo about right turns on red to the Select Board. Guilford agrees to request a spot on a future agenda.

#### 8. Town Commons

Vince inquires about the disposition of a recent Town Meeting resolution calling for a definition of the various commons in town. Guilford states that there is no money to commission a survey and that it cannot be done in-house because there is not a registered surveyor on staff. Michael believes that an effort to determine the historical boundaries of the commons will yield "interesting" results.

Vince suggests a scaled-back "as-built" survey to discover right-of-ways and utility easements, which can form the basis of a more specific preservation proposal to Town Meeting. It could be done piece-by-piece over five years: the three segments of commons in the town center; the East, South, and North Amherst (Pine Street/Meadow Street) Commons; and the Cushman Village Commons (Sweetzer and Kendrick Parks are already laid out). Guilford and Vince estimate that the cost would be about \$1500 per segment, with the South Amherst Commons in the \$2000-2500 range.

Vince believes that the Select Board can be lobbied to propose this project for the capital plan, while Guilford suggests asking for Community Preservation Act money. In either case, spreading the work over five years would enable meaningful public hearings to be held for each area, and a decision about a final, recordable survey based on the results of those hearings could be brought before Town Meeting. Vince would like to begin as early as this Fall. Michael thinks it might be passed off to the Planning Department, but Vince points out that the Planning Department has already had an opportunity to tackle this project. Furthermore, since the commons are part of the roadway they are under the jurisdiction of the Select Board, and it makes sense for the Public Works Committee to initiate this proposal.

Vince moves that the Select Board and Community Preservation Act Committee be asked to fund a five-year plan to survey the town commons. The committee approves the motion unanimously.

9. The meeting adjourns at 8:30pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 2.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert J. Crowner